

**First 5 Sonoma County  
Sonoma County Children and Families Commission**

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**LEAD AGENCY /ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
FOR  
CHILD CARE CENTERS and FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**

<b>DATE ISSUED:</b>	<b>March 31, 2003</b>
<b>LETTERS OF INTENT DUE:</b>	<b>May 30, 2003</b>
<b>BIDDERS CONFERENCE:</b>	<b>June 10, 2003</b>
<b>SUBMISSION DEADLINE:</b>	<b>July 11, 2003 (5:00 p.m.)</b>

**Sonoma County Department of Health Services  
Prevention and Planning Division  
3273 Airway Drive, Suite C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Telephone: 565-6680 Fax: 565-6619  
Email: [children@sonoma-county.org](mailto:children@sonoma-county.org)**

The passage of the California Children and Families First Act of 1998 (Proposition 10) represents an unprecedented opportunity to create and implement a comprehensive, collaborative, and integrated system of information and services to promote, support, and optimize early childhood development in Sonoma County. Under the Act, each county is charged with the development of a comprehensive strategic plan to create local systems of services and programs that emphasize access and flexibility, ensure local decision-making and eliminate duplication of administrative systems.

The Sonoma County Children and Families Commission was established in December 1998 through an ordinance adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. The seven-member Commission includes representation from the Board, County health and human services agencies and individuals with expertise in early child development, health and education. In April 2000, the Commission completed a year-long community planning process with submission of its first Strategic Plan for children and families in Sonoma County. The Strategic Plan outlines the goals, objectives and funding priorities of the Commission and provides a framework for the allocation of the approximately \$5 million in tobacco tax revenues which Proposition 10 generates for Sonoma County each year.

The Commission has allocated up to \$300,000 for the period October 2003 through June 2006 to fund a child care quality improvement project to benefit children 0-5. This program priority supports the Commission's goals and objectives as stated in the Commission's strategic plan, and complements the \$750,000 allocated annually to the Regional Child Care Initiative, one of the Commission's major funding priorities.

***Goal 2: Families will have access to high quality, dependable, stable and affordable child care.***

***Objective 2: Increase the quality\* and amount of affordable accessible early care and education services in Sonoma County.***

***\*The focus of this objective places specific emphasis on these areas of Quality: safe and healthy environments; training and education; commitment to the field; professional level compensation; job satisfaction; consistency of care; developmentally appropriate materials and activities; and community services to provide support for those working with children and families.***

This \$300,000 in funding has been made possible through savings from other funded programs in fiscal year 2000-2001 and is not anticipated to continue in future years. Therefore, **these monies are to be used for one-time, rather than ongoing activities.**

Appropriate expenditures will result in increasing the ability of licensed Sonoma County child care centers and homes to provide quality child care to young children under 5, through:

- using Harms-Clifford environmental rating scales
- identifying program improvement opportunities
- developing and implementing quality improvement plans
- short-term mentoring of child care center directors, teachers and family child care providers

**in a manner consistent with the project specifications contained in Attachment A to this Request For Proposals (RFP).**

## **Request for Proposals**

The Sonoma County Children and Families Commission requests proposals from interested organizations, agencies, and individuals who have the capacity to provide short-term mentoring and quality improvement services to child care center directors, child care teaching staff and family child care home providers utilizing Harms-Clifford early childhood environmental rating scales to initially assess program strengths and improvement opportunities.

**Provision of culturally competent services will be essential** to adequately serve our county's culturally diverse population.

Up to \$300,000 is available to fund this initiative for activities conducted during the funding period October 2003 to June 2006.

The Commission encourages collaborative proposals among organizations, agencies, and/or individuals. Collaborative proposals should carefully delineate each agency or individual's responsibility and role in the project and should clearly identify which agency will serve as the primary fiscal agent. If applicable, separate budgets and subcontractor agreements should be included. The Sonoma County Children and Families Commission reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted in response to this RFP, to award less than \$300,000 through this RFP process, and to apportion funding between two or more contractors.

In accordance with authorizing legislation, funds granted by the Sonoma County Children & Families Commission through this RFP process **must not be used to supplant or replace funding from other sources**.

The selected contractor(s) will be expected to provide periodic progress reports to the Sonoma County Children & Families Commission, and its committees, and to work with the Commission's evaluation and service integration consultants, staff, and other partners, as directed.

## **Letters of Intent**

Agencies and organizations wishing to apply **must** submit a letter of intent in the form attached to this RFP as Attachment B by Friday, May 30, 2003 (5:00 pm). Proposals will not be accepted from any agency, organization or individual that has not submitted a letter of intent.

## **Bidder's Conference**

A bidder's conference will be conducted on June 10, 2003 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the offices of the Prevention and Planning Division at 3273 Airway Drive. Information on the local Sonoma County Children and Families Commission Strategic Plan and currently funded programs intended to improve access to quality child care will be presented and discussed, and questions about the Project Specifications (Attachment A) and the RFP will be addressed. The

bidder's conference will be open to agencies, organizations and individuals that have submitted a letter of intent.

## **Submission Deadline for Proposals**

**Proposals must be received by Friday, July 11, 2003 at 5:00 PM. Submit an original and six (6) unstapled copies of the proposal to:**

**Sonoma County Children and Families Commission  
c/o County of Sonoma Department of Health Services  
Prevention and Planning Division  
3273 Airway Drive, Suite C  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Fax (707) 565-6619  
Contact person: Lisa Lambiase  
Phone: (707) 565-6653**

## **Proposal Instructions**

All proposals should include the following:

- A cover sheet, including agency name, address; and contact person's name, title, phone number, e-mail and fax number;
- An original signature of the person authorized by the agency to bind the agreement;
- Three budgets/line item justifications; one each for FY 2003-2004, FY 2004-2005, and FY 2005-2006;

### Budget Requirements:

- 1) Include no more than 15% for administrative overhead or indirect costs.  
(There is considerable variation in how individual agencies calculate administrative costs. For this reason, please identify the specific cost factors you have included.)
  - 2) Include 10% for evaluation by the Commission's evaluation consultant in conjunction with Commission staff.
  - 3) Specify all personnel by job title and payment amount, i.e. unit cost and/or hourly rate.
- A Curriculum Vitae or resume for the head of the agency, the project coordinator and for key staff and any consultants;
  - Job descriptions for project coordinator and key staff;
  - A copy of the most recent audit for the lead agency (i.e. fiscal agent);
  - A 3 year scope of work including a detailed list of project activities with timeline/completion date; responsible person (position title) and/or agency (if more than one agency is involved); number of center classrooms served; number of family child care homes served; and estimated number of children under age 5 served;

### Scope of Work Requirements:

- 1) At a minimum, a successful applicant must plan to serve a cumulative total of 117 family child care homes and 44 center classrooms; applicants proposing to serve more will receive higher priority.
  - 2) At a minimum, a successful applicant must plan to serve a minimum of 50% of family child care homes in Sonoma County with Latina child care providers who are monolingual or bilingual Spanish speakers cumulatively over the three years of this project. Outreach and training activities and staffing patterns must demonstrate capacity to accomplish this objective. Applicants planning (and demonstrating a capacity) to serve more than 50% will be accorded greater consideration.
- The names and contact information of three funders (other than the Children and Families Commission) who can provide comment on your organization's administrative capacity and project management history for the last five years;
  - The name, title, and organizational affiliation of the individual with the authority to bind an agreement with the County of Sonoma; and
  - Responses to the application questions below.

## **Application Questions**

1. Give a brief history of your organization(s), current programming, and capacity to undertake the activities detailed in the Child Care Quality Improvement Mentoring Project. (½ page per organization, 10 points total)
2. What is your experience in developing and delivering programs to train child care professionals? (½ page, 5 points)
3. What is your experience in mentoring child care professionals and/or developing and overseeing mentor programs? (½ page, 10 points)
4. Describe your experience and level of expertise in administering Harms-Clifford environmental rating scales and how it qualifies you to undertake this project. (1 page, 15 points)
5. What key features will be built into your project to assure inclusion of child care teachers and family child care serving:
  - children of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds
  - children with special needs
  - children in geographically remote locations?
 (1½ pages, 20 points)
6. How would this project add value to the other Sonoma County programs currently funded by First 5 Sonoma County and others? What steps will you take to ensure that your project contributes to collaboration with existing programs and creates new collaborations between agencies in a manner that best serves child care providers and teachers and the children in their care? (2 pages, 15 points)

7. In an ideal situation, what do you see as the key components to ensuring continual quality improvement in family child care homes and child care centers and why? (1½ page, 15 points)
8. What do you foresee as significant challenges in this project and how will you address them? (1 page, 10 points)

*Limit attachments to no more than 5 pages total.*

## **Additional Factors Considered**

In addition to the above questions, the following components of each proposal will be carefully considered. Proposals not deemed acceptable for any reason in at least one of the following areas may be declined:

Personnel Qualifications (including established personnel, recruitment strategies, and training plans)

Scope of Work (including fidelity to Project Specifications- Attachment A and your plans for further enhancing the project)

Budget/line item justifications (including compliance with administrative overhead and evaluation expenditures and your overall plans for allocating resources)

## **Waiver of immaterial defect**

The Commission may waive any immaterial deviation in any proposal. The determination as to whether a defect or deviation is material or immaterial shall be made by the Commission in its sole discretion. The waiver of any immaterial defect(s) shall not excuse a proposal from full compliance with the contract terms if a contract is awarded.

## **Appeals Process**

Applicants will be notified of the Commission's selection following the Commission meeting in which a decision is made. Notification will be made by posting a Notice of Intent to Award at the Commission's offices at 3273 Airway Drive, Suite C, Santa Rosa, and by faxing that notice to all applicants. Individuals, agencies and/or organizations not selected for funding have the right to file an appeal if they believe that a significant material error occurred in the proposal evaluation and/or selection process that had a negative effect on their consideration for funding. The following rules apply to the appeals process:

Appeals will only be accepted from agencies or organizations that submitted proposals for funding. No third party complaints will be considered.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Sonoma County Children and Families Commission at the address printed on page four of this document, before 5:00 p.m. on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) business day following notification.

The appeal must describe the specific alleged violation of process or procedure which serves as the basis for appeal. Agencies/organizations are entitled to a summary of the rating sheets for their own proposal(s).

The appeal must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person representing the agency or organization that is making the appeal. Commission staff will issue a final decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

**PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS  
for Quality Improvement Project  
for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes**

**Project Overview:** The mentoring project provides trained individuals to conduct the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale/ Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale with providers in the Sonoma County community and to develop and implement a quality improvement project based upon the findings. The peer mentors will be experienced family child care providers and center teachers/directors.

**A. Family Child Care**

**Mentor Selection:** All mentors must meet the following requirements.

Education/Experience- must meet **any one** of the following criteria:

- (1) qualify for Teacher level or higher on the Child Development Matrix and have at least 3 years experience as a family child care provider
- (2) have at least 6 units ECE (or alternative units such as Waldorf or Montessori ) and at least 5 years experience as a family child care provider.
- (3) be accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) or the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP) with at least 5 years experience as a family child care provider

Additional Requirements- must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (1) have completed a Harms-Clifford Child Care Environment Rating scale class
- (2) be willing to commit to at least two hours of mentoring per week plus additional time needed for mentor training
- (3) permit an external rater to use the FDCRS or ECERS (Harms-Clifford Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale), and/or ITERS (Harms-Clifford Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale) at their facility. The outcome must be an overall rating of 5 or higher. *(There will be no charge to the applicants for the external rating.)*
- (4) possess good communication and interpersonal skills

Recruitment of a sufficient number of bilingual/bicultural mentors as well as mentors to represent all geographic areas of Sonoma County will be a priority.

**Protégé Selection** Protégés (those receiving the mentoring) will be selected according to the following criteria:

- (1) serves a minimum of 3 children on an ongoing basis, with a majority of those children under the age of 5.
- (2) in business as a licensed family child care home for at least 6 months
- (3) first priority for participation given to those in business for 6-24 months
- (4) second priority given to those in business more than 24 months
- (5) within the above parameters, participants will be selected on a first come, first served basis with program implementation staggered throughout year



External Rater, Mentor and Protégé Recruitment. At a minimum, the following strategies will be employed to identify potential external raters, mentors and protégés:

- (1) Contact key staff affiliated with the following organizations and groups:
  - (a) The PEERS Project and the Latino Provider Group of the Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County (4C's)
  - (b) The Childcare Support Project of the Early Learning Institute
  - (c) The Behavioral Consultation project of CARE Children Counseling Center
  - (d) Local family child care associations
  - (e) Local child care Resource and Referral agencies
  - (f) The Child Development Department and Mentoring Program of Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC)
- (2) Publicize this opportunity in English and Spanish using the following communications channels:
  - (a) Community Care Licensing
  - (b) newsletter, flyers, mailings to childcare providers
  - (c) local media

Program Content. (Estimate 6 site visits- 3 each to the child care program of the mentor and to that of the protégé. On the average, each mentoring relationship will last between 2 and 6 months.)

- (1) Conduct orientations for all protégés on a regional basis including, at a minimum:
  - a. two-hour *"Introduction to Mentoring"*
  - b. two-hour *"Introduction to Use of the Harms-Clifford Rating Scale"* –waived for those protégés who have successfully completed the SRJC class on this topic.Orientations will be conducted at least twice each year.
- (2) conduct FDCRS assessment-
  - a. validate self-study if protégé has taken SRJC class or
  - b. assist through self-assessment if protégé is new to FDCRS
- (3) develop/implement Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) based on findings of assessment. Provide \$250 program implementation grants to each protégé for purchases related to QIP.

Budget. The program budget will include, at a minimum, the following cost elements:

- External raters (\$50 per hour ) to assist in the initial mentor hiring/training process and to perform (or validate) a Harms-Clifford rating at the site where the mentor candidate provides child care.
- Mentors will receive \$500 for up to a maximum of 20 hours of direct contact time; or a pro-rated amount if fewer hours are needed.
- Protégés will receive \$250 program improvement grants.
- Substitutes will be paid \$10 hour.
- Mileage reimbursement at 36.5 cents per mile.
- A reserve of \$1,000 to cover recruitment and training costs in case of external rater or mentor turnover.
- 10-15% of the total budget for program evaluation.
- Program administrative overhead and/or indirect costs must be itemized and may not exceed 15% of the overall budget.

## **B. Child Care Centers**

The program will differ from that for family child care homes in the following ways:

- At least 75% of all the teachers in the center and the center director must have completed (or must be concurrently enrolled) in a Harms-Clifford Rating Scale class (or an equivalent alternative training on use of the Harms-Clifford Rating Scales.)
- All classrooms in the center must agree to participate.
- Mentors will be assigned in pairs; one to work with the teachers and one to work with the director.
- Mentor education/experience- must meet all the criteria in Section A above. In addition, the teacher mentor must be at the Master Teacher level or higher on the California matrix with at least 3 years experience as a center teacher; the director mentor must be at the Site Supervisor level on the matrix with at least 3 years experience as a center director.
- Mentors assigned to centers shall be additionally screened to assure that they possess experience/skills in group facilitation.
- Program improvement grants of \$250 will be provided to each classroom, with a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$1,000 available for each center.

## Mandatory, Non-Binding Letter of Intent

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**Must be received by May 30, 2003 by 5:00 p.m., by mail, fax or hand delivery.  
E-mail documents will not be accepted.**

**TO:** Lisa R. Lambiase, MPH  
First 5 Sonoma County  
Prevention and Planning Division  
3273 Airway Drive, Suite C  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Fax (707) 565-6619

**FROM:**

**Name & Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address (if available):** \_\_\_\_\_

*We intend to apply for the Lead Agency/Administrator for Quality Improvement Project for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes funding available from First 5 Sonoma County (Sonoma County Children and Families Commission). We are aware that this is a non-binding letter of intent and that our application is due on July 11, 2003 by 5:00 p.m. We understand that a list of the names of organizations filing timely letters of intent will be produced and shared with all interested parties, in an effort to facilitate collaborative responses. We further understand that a Bidders Conference will be conducted on June 10, 2003 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Commission Office at 3273 Airway Drive, Santa Rosa 95403 and that all interested parties are encouraged to attend.*